



Arizona Department of Agriculture

1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-4373 FAX (602) 542-5420

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: May 16, 2006

MEDIA CONTACT: Katie Decker, 602-542-0958

19 Inspectors and Officers with the Arizona Department of Agriculture Learning to Combat Terrorism at Our Border

(Phoenix, AZ) – A large percentage of drug smuggling interdictions are associated with commercial vehicle trailers and the commodities they haul. Produce has become a viable means to conceal contraband items such as illegal drugs. Over 8.5 million trucks are registered to transit the highways of the United States. These vehicles are a way of life; they routinely travel our highways with access to all of our major cities, seaports, airports, military bases, and governmental buildings. Commercial motor vehicles smuggle tons of illegal drugs, in addition to having the potential to deliver weapons of mass destruction, including agroterrorism agents, across our nation's highways.

With heightened awareness of the vulnerabilities of our food supply to potential terrorist acts, these same produce loads are gathering additional attention. However, as agriculture inspectors have the authority to inspect all produce loads, one can easily see the importance of providing them with the necessary training to identify concealment tactics within the load and vehicle while conducting their required inspections. The Arizona Department of Agriculture recognizes the threat and will be sending 19 inspectors to the following training right here in Arizona.

As a result, 19 inspectors and officers will attend Desert Snow Bio-Terrorism Awareness training May 17-19 at Pima County Fairgrounds, 11300 S. Houghton Rd. Located South of I/10 and Houghton Rd. However, **the hands-on and visual portion will be the afternoon of May 18.**

Consider:

- Arizona, California and Florida are the only states with dedicated ports of entry conducting agricultural inspections.
- In the last 12 months, ports of entry inspectors in Arizona inspected 120,000 commercial vehicle trailers for pests. As a result, port of entry personnel had possibly 120,000 chances to identify and prevent a terrorist strike or interdict drug trafficking.

Visual Elements:

- Five tractor trailers housing the following simulated elements: 40,000 pounds of drugs, over \$13 million and weapons of mass destruction.
- Inspectors learning how to find "indicators" of terrorism activity, such as an operator who owns his own truck, tank covers on the back of the truck and missing bolts and screws.
- Learn how to profile a driver before you even inspect the load.

###